



Hillside Specialist School & College

Providing exceptional education for all students

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Friday 20 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Can I thank you for your patience and cooperation over this difficult period in following Government guidelines regarding the Coronavirus. Myself and my Senior Leadership Team have been monitoring pupil and staffing ratios each day to ensure the safe and appropriate ratios are maintained. This has become increasingly challenging as the week has progressed. There has been some confusion over the last two days as to the details regarding the keyworker definition and how this would impact on both the families of those attending Hillside and the provision for our own staff and their families. As you can appreciate, transport into school is also likely to be affected, with some taxi PAs falling into the vulnerable category themselves and immediately following self-isolation guidelines.

I have taken the decision to close school on Monday 23 March 2020 and Tuesday 24 March 2020 in the first instance in order to assess staff availability as it is impossible to identify this in advance. This will also provide opportunity to respond to the latest Local Authority guidance. The school is committed to providing information and suggested activities for parents to access at home, which we will work towards sending out to you next week, where we have staff who are able to do this.

If I am able to re-open school to pupils at some point next week I will notify you through the usual communication channels of the schools official Facebook page, school website or texting service and we will inform the transport Department of our intention to open. For those families who are self-isolating, I ask you to continue to do so for the recommended period of time before notifying school of the child's intention to return, so that we can accurately manage ratios in the event of reopening.

The Government guidance states that if a child can be safely cared for at home, they should be and I would ask you to follow this advice if possible.

I fully understand parents' concerns for their child's education and acknowledge that all of our pupils are included in the vulnerable pupil category due to their EHC plan status, but as all pupils at Hillside have an EHC plan in place, it is not possible for school to safely meet this requirement with the limited staff available.

Yours sincerely

Paul Leaper
Headteacher

